

In the claims:

The claims have been renumbered and amended as follows. Please replace the claims with the following clean set of claims.

- 1.(Amended)A method for introducing an intact oligonucleotide into a mammal, the method comprising the step of orally administering to the mammal a chimeric oligonucleotide, the oligonucleotide comprising about 6 to 50 nucleotides linked via at least one phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage and at least one internucleotide linkage selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate, phosphorodithioate, alkylphosphonothioate, phosphoramidate, phosphoramidite, phosphate ester, carbamate, carbonate, phosphate triester, acetamidate, and carboxymethyl ester, the oligonucleotide further comprising at least one 2'-O-alkyl ribonucleotide, whereby the oligonucleotide is present in intact form in plasma at least six hours following oral administration.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide comprises at least one alkylphosphonate internucleotide linkage.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the oligonucleotide comprises at least one alkylphosphonate internucleotide linkage at its 3' and/or 5' terminal end.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the oligonucleotide comprises at least two alkylphosphonate internucleotide linkages at its 3' and 5' terminal ends.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the oligonucleotide comprises at least one methylphosphonate internucleotide linkage.